



Office of Special Education Mission Statement

The Office of Special Education, located in the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, advocates for the availability of the full range of personnel, programming, and placement options, including early intervention and transition services, required to assure that all individuals with disabilities are able to achieve maximum independence upon exiting from school.

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Dr. Greg Boris, University of South Dakota
Marilyn Chambers, Teacher, Custer School District
Deanne Curran, Parent
Jane Leite, Speech/Language Therapist, Sioux Falls School District
Diane Lowery, Department of Education, Office of Technical Assistance
Char Madsen-Clark, Special Programs Director, Belle Fourche School District
Carol Massanari, Ph.D., Program Specialist, MPRRC
Joyce Molitor, Teacher and Parent, Custer School District
David Nissen, Parent and Sioux Falls Family Support
Ed O'Leary, Ed.D., Program Specialist, MPRRC
Nancy Olson, Parent and Brookings Area Family Support
Georgia Ramos, Special Education Director, Aberdeen School District
Marie Rickert, Teacher, Sioux Falls School District
Gloria Schaffer, Special Education Director, Custer School District
Kim Soldatke, Teacher, Sioux Falls School District
Stephanie Weideman, Workgroup Coordinator, Office of Special Education
Rhonda Young, Teacher, Aberdeen School District

To download the functional standards, visit the Office of Special Education website at www.state.sd.us/state/executive/deca/special/special.htm. For further information or questions concerning the functional standards, contact the Office of Special Education at 605-773-3678.

To download the general education content standards, visit the Office of Technical Assistance website at www.state.sd.us/state/executive/decata/Content.htm. For further information or questions concerning the general education content standards, contact the Office of Technical Assistance at 605-773-6400.

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South Dakota Functional Standards Document Overview

In the May 2000 issue of PHI DELTA KAPPAN, the article “High Standards for Whom?” states: “There is significant agreement on the standards for standards. Proponents agree that standards should be grounded in core academic disciplines and should cover what students should know (content) and be able to do (performance)... Finally, standards should be crystal clear to everyone: students, parents and teachers... All children can live up to much higher expectations.”

Both state and federal law require educational content standards be developed for all children. In 1997, the South Dakota State Legislature passed a bill directing that content standards be developed in language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science across all grade levels. These standards are now being implemented statewide.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 also requires that states establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities. These standards must be consistent with the goals and standards for all children (IDEA 300.137).

What are the Functional Standards?

Many students with disabilities are able to work toward the goals in the core content standards. However, the core standards as developed do not appropriately address the educational needs of all students with disabilities. Therefore,

functional standards have been developed to meet the needs of these students.

The functional standards extend the developmental spectrum of the core content standards. This allows all students the opportunity to progress academically toward independent living.

The functional standards:

- ❖ are a progression of skills necessary for independent functioning (birth through age 21);
- ❖ are based on the state content standards;
- ❖ are a user-friendly guide in assisting with IEP development;
- ❖ parallel the state content standards; and,
- ❖ are academically based— language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

Who will use the Functional Standards?

The following are guidelines to assist the IEP team in determining which students will use the functional standards:

- ❖ The student's cognitive ability and adaptive skill levels prevent completing the standard academic curricula, even with modifications and accommodations.

- ❖ The student requires extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to apply and transfer skills.
- ❖ The student is involved in a functional, basic-skills education program.
- ❖ The student's inability to complete the standard academic curricula is not the result of extended absences; visual, auditory or physical disabilities.

The following is a guideline to assist the IEP team in determining which students will use the functional standards in conjunction with the core content standards:

- ❖ The student's achievement level in one or more core areas does not allow him/her to participate in the core curriculum.

How does the IEP team use the Functional Standards?

After the IEP team determines that functional standards would be appropriate for a student, the team would:

- ❖ consider the additional use of the core content standards in conjunction with the functional standards
- ❖ determine the impact on curriculum and instruction
- ❖ use standards as a basis for the development of the individualized education plan.

Note: Since many IEP goals are integrated into all areas of the curriculum, the IEP goals may or may not be content specific.